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THE UNDERSTANDING HILLS

LIVINGSTON L. BIDDLE

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Juliette Raymond Gwen

from

Alice Newbold

Easter 1917 –

Brookley – Shaw!

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The Understanding Hills

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The Understanding Hills

And Other Poems

BY

LIVINGSTON LUDLOW BIDDLE

NEW YORK
Dodd, Mead and Company
1916

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KD 1556

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* This poem was written to be read before the Φ B K society at the annual meeting held in Philadelphia, December, 1915.

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The Understanding Hills

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THE UNDERSTANDING HILLS

YOU who are torn in spirit and in mind,
Whose soul the cup of grief has drained
To its last, bitter dregs,
When the first poignant shock has waned
Leaving you weak yet filled with strange despair,
Weep not since weeping must be vain
But go you up in the high hills
Just ere the coming of the rain.
Watch you the gathering clouds of storm
Brooding from crest to crest
And blotting out each towering peak's grim form
Then suddenly their shifting shapes unite
And with unbroken front advance
To pour their sodden might
Upon the face of Nature. All the world
Now blighted doth appear and glooms with shades of night.

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Yet, though the world you watch at darkest
seems,
Know that those hills which in the distance lie
Already may from tempest's wrath be freed,
Already may be basking 'neath a friendly sky.
Wait but a little while
And where you watch will from its gloom
emerge —
As swiftly widening rifts in western heavens
smile,
As golden waves of sunlight then re-surge
Over each stricken thing which soon they purge
Of black despair and sullen hopelessness.
The world, with joys re-found, is glad once
more,
Forgetting things which grieve through things
which bless.

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You who are torn in spirit and in mind,
Yes — go you up among the understanding
hills
For oft, when fails all else, those wounds kind
nature heals.
And in each aching heart her peace instils.

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A SPRING IDYLL

A CLOUDLESS sky o'erhead, a genial sun
Filtering its gleaming, amber rays
Through branches and the newly-budding leaves,
Dappling the forest floor for our enchanted gaze
With shadows and with patches of bright gold.
In the mild air the smell of earth and earthy mold
And scent of tiny blooms awakened by the lays
Of murmuring streams which onward madly race
Singing of their release from winter's chill embrace.
A West wind whispers softly through the trees,

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A drowsy hum of bees comes from the new-born
flowers
And thrushes chant their tuneful litanies
From the green gloom of hidden, leafy bowers.

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IN A PINE FOREST

I WANDERED, lonely, 'mid the murmuring pines,
Lonely, because my loved one was away,
Lonely though all the forest seemed to sing
With joy of flowers and birds and magic spring.

Then suddenly my loneliness was gone
As goes black night at coming of the dawn.

For in the nodding form of each fair flower
The image of my loved one was revealed
And in the West wind's sighing through each tree
I heard my loved one whispering to me.

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THE TAJ MAHAL

FAR, far from here beyond all Western seas
I know a land where every passing breeze
Wafts to me ancient lore and histories
Voicing its tales through whisperings of the trees.
Their leafy tongues respond to each caress
Now murmuring low of rulers and their queens
Who lived and saw and loved and died — ah yes,
For death from kings a harvest also gleans.
But when come tempests and wild storm winds blow,
They moan strange tales of famine, plague or blight,
Of secret murders, war and wide-spread woe,
For this is India whereof I write.

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In this far land there is a tomb so fair
That those who view its wondrous loveliness
Are held spell-bound, forgetting every care
While grief and pain grow for the moment less.
Built by the mighty Shah Jehan it stands
Of love's great power convincing monument;
Though of an age and living in those lands
Where men took many wives, he was content
With only one. But so adored was she
That, when death claimed her, single he remained
For all his days and in her memory
Took oath that, ere his reign had waned,
He would erect a tomb which should outlast
In beauty and in perfect symmetry
All tombs of years to come, of ages past.

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Better that we forget the cruelty,
The suffering endured by countless slaves
Who for long, weary months did toil and sweat,
Yes — even finding through this work their graves:
The architect lest he should e'er beget
Another wonder-child that might compare
Was robbed of eyes. All this we must forget
Since most great things to which the world falls heir
Are consummated only when a debt
Of pain or death or sorrow has been paid.
Few men who wrought with pen and conquering sword
Have traced more lastingly with ink or blade
Upon the sands of time, their names' record

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Than this frail woman whose distinction lay
But through her being able to inspire
A love which knew not how or wished to stray
E'en after perished was its heart's desire.

'Mid shrubbery and trees this fair tomb lies,
Along an entering path white fountains play,
A pearl set in the turquoise of rare skies
And emeralds, thus it seems to one by day.
Within, reign solemn stillness and gray gloom,
Attendants, silent-footed, vigil keep
And scatter o'er two graves the jasmine's bloom
Where now a man and wife sleep their last sleep;
For after death, his wishes were obeyed,
The Shah Jehan was laid beside his love.
Upon request and if a trifle paid
Some guardian chants soft notes; dim heights above

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Take up the sounds each depth re-echoing
Till sweet, low chords are filtered downward
when,
Like music of some heavenly choir, these ring
Then die away as dies a hushed amen.

At dusk most lovely is the tomb to me:
White marble walls with precious stones in-
laid
Take on the tint of ancient ivory
As the rich, golden light begins to fade;
A bit of carving o'er the Western door
Appearing almost like some rare, old lace,
The sun still lingering as though it forebore
To leave such an attractive resting-place.
More human now it seems and less apart
As if a gentle mother who doth hark
To her sad children with kind, pitying heart.
And now the sky is swiftly growing dark
For twilight here lasts but a moment brief;

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Dim, dimmer still those fairy outlines show,
One hears the patter of some falling leaf
Or just a near-by fountain's rythmic flow.
All else is wrapped in silence tense, profound,
More ghostly looms the tomb in this weird
light
As though some mist-like curtain fell around,
A warning vanguard of approaching night,
Then soon black darkness creeps out from its
lair
To stretch forth and envelop everything.
A sudden chill pervades the evening air
Yet long I sit there idly pondering
On love, its wondrous joys, its bitter pain,
Does all the bliss for its griefs compensate?
E'en while I muse the blackness yields again,
For now there comes a moon to dissipate

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The mists and lo! that white, pure sepulchre
Gleams out once more ethereal, shimmering,
A silent but convincing arbiter,
An answer to my thoughts and questioning.

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THE BIRTH OF LOVE

LOVE comes to some as comes the rising sun
In tropic lands where momentary dawn
Gives briefest warning of a day begun
And scarce are stars behind their veils withdrawn
When, bold, impetuous mounts this ball of light
O'erwhelming night as upward now it darts.
Just so this passion-love, born of first sight,
O'erwhelms with sudden rush some human hearts.

To others, love comes as the evening star
When we sit at the close of day and gaze
With weary eyes fixed on the heavens afar,
Vast, opalescent dome kissed by pale rays
Of a fast waning sun. We stare and stare
Yet view naught save a vacant wall of sky
Which shades to hue of sapphires as the air

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Is tinged with sudden chill and from on high
Down slides the fiery orb behind gray hills,
Into sad valleys of gone yesterdays.
Lulled by a peace which this fair scene instils,
We droop our lids, perchance, like one who prays,
Just for the briefest count, and now behold!
When once again we look that darkening wall
Is bare no more; a twinkling point of gold,
Still pale and vague but quite defined withal,
Peeps forth at us in bashful loveliness.
This waxing star was surely there before
As were the loves of some who little guess
E'en their incipient births until the door
Of lonely hearts has long been left ajar.
And so, as with this child of twilight skies,
Those loves, which yearning hearts may not debar,
Are oft long gazed at with unseeing eyes.

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TO ONE WHO SAILED AWAY

HOW sinks the heart and fails
When to far lands we watch depart some ship
That bears one loved till, fading out, its sails
Below the sky line dip.

Then still we gaze and gaze
Towards where their ship was swallowed in the main,
Yet knowing well that for long, weary days
Our gazing must be vain.

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Most eyes are dimmed by tears;
Some men weep not, but is their grief the less?
For to each inner soul come nameless fears
And ah! such loneliness.

O ship, swift blow the wind
That wafts thee far, so earlier be thy start
For havens here with one beloved to find
The haven of a heart.

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THE WITCHES' REVENGE

DEEP in the Southern forests' eerie, midnight gloom,
When lightning flashes and thunder crashes
They ride, each on a broom,
Great witches gaunt with eyes that haunt,
Foul lips that shriek of doom.

As each one dashes by, the branches catch her hair
And this attaches in queer, gray patches,
You see them everywhere.
Such branches die and shrivel dry,
The witch-hair still clings there.

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TO ONE BELOVED

AS chill, gray mists of early morn
All vanish at the sun's caress,
So flee my cares do I but see
Thy loveliness.

Yet fairest flowers, if deprived
Of moisture or God-given dew,
Must surely perish; likewise I
If robbed of you.

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LINES AND WHAT LIES BETWEEN

LOOK with the magic of thine eyes
On these dull lines then thou must see
A wealth of words between them lies,
Words traced in love from me to thee.

For each one that defined doth grow
I pray thee from thy heart to send
Me back a thought so I may know
That thou dost surely comprehend.

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TO THE NORTH WIND IN WINTER

WIND of the North!
Wind from the land of everlasting snows!
What are the weird, wild sounds
You bear upon your wintry blast;
Are they some un-stilled echoes of your cradle song?
Was it 'mid frigid cliffs of glaciers gaunt and bleak,
Beneath a shuddering sky which knows no sun,
That you were given birth,
Or in dank, brooding caverns vast, ice-walled,
Reverberating with the wail
Of subterranean seas?

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At your command,
Behold! great rivers check their onward flow
And lakes and pools are cased in cloaks of crystal mail.
Each, fettered by the icy bonds you weld,
Must sleep until there comes a vernal sun
Whose rays contain the dissipating key.

And do you lonely grow, at times,
Your dreaded sister of the East
Is summoned from her fog-encumbered skies;
At touch of your chill breath
Her veil of mist to veil of snow is changed,
Then, with a potency two-fold,
Together you assail and flay a cowering world.
Great forests are laid low, great ships destroyed,

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God's handiwork and man's — and men themselves —
While over all,
The maimed, the slain, you drop a blinding shroud
To mask your wanton deeds.

Blow, mighty North Wind, blow
Across the Arctic Seas,
Through valleys, over hills, to the abodes of man.
Roar down our chimneys and with sudden gusts
Dash salvos of harsh sleet against the window panes
And make us draw more closely 'round the hearth,

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Thankful to fate
That we are warm and safe inside.
But, when in kindlier mood,
As part atonement for your cruelty,
Spread fertilising blankets o'er the planted fields,
The thirst of drought-parched springs assuage
And weave for our wondering eyes with mystic snow
On bush, on tree, on those same window panes
Fantastic figures which outvie,
In magic of design, the very stars.

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TO THE SOUTH WIND AS WINTER ENDS

WIND of the South!
Wind from the lands of sunshine and of flowers!
How softly now you kiss the thawing fields,
Stirring each sleeping thing and bidding it awake,
Crooning through fir and pine,
Through every bush and tree,
Your resurrection song.

Behold! At your approach, the ice and snow
Which long have shackled fast the passive earth,
Swift disappear,
The cloak of faded brown that lies beneath,
Changing in turn to one of living green
As every plant gives heed
And bares frail, verdant shoots to your caress.

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The long-stilled waters of small brooks and
pools,
Of lakes, of rivers, burst the crystal film
Which binds with chill, monotonous embrace.
Then soon these waters once again resume
Their various play and happy murmurings
While in their mirror surfaces
We watch the lazy clouds go sailing by.
In these same waters, too,
The sun, deprived of them for many a day,
His glowing face may lave;
The stars and moon
A thirst, too long endured, this night may sat-
isfy.

Blow, balmy South Wind, blow
From far-off tropic seas,
Through forests carpeted with giant ferns
And strange, exotic blooms
Which thrive but in the impenetrable shade;

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Where gorgeous butterflies drift to and fro
Seeming like bits of rainbows given life.
Blow through broad groves of stately palms
And stoop sometimes to moisten parchèd lips
In lily-covered lakes.
Then, wafting on your healing, amorous blast
Perfumes from each place visited,
Steal through our windows in the early dawn,
Bringing the Sleeper treasure-dreams
Of Springs already past,
Bringing to those who lie with wakeful eyes
A fragrant promise of glad Springs to come.

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BECAUSE OF THEE

BECAUSE of thee,
Things which to me were meaningless before
I now can view with comprehending eyes;
The forest gives me of its secret lore
And nature bares her hidden mysteries.

Because of thee,
Music I scarce gave ear to in past years
Now charms and thrills me with a mystic power
And sometimes brings to eyes strange, sudden tears
Or makes me heedless of the fleeting hour.

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Because of thee,
At dawn the heavens gleam with hues more
rare,
More beauty in the sun-set skies I see,
The flowers grow more fragrant and more fair,
The whole world seems more wonderful to
me.

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MEMORIES

HOW sad at times seem recollected words,
Words that were murmured with our loved one's fleeting breath,
And sad the memory of a last caress;
Who is it calls thee kind, O death?

How sad is just an empty, little glove
Which still retains the fragrance of a vanished hand,
The haunting odor of some favorite flower,
The sudden end of things we planned.

And ah! how sad is music or a song
Dear to those gone before, whose words and strains remind;
Echoes from lands of all that might have been;
O death, I ne'er could call thee kind!

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TO A LOVED ONE

FAIR as the vision of a summer moon
Reflected on the bosom of an inland sea
Or of bright stars viewed near the edge of thunder clouds,
Thou art so fair to me.

Dear as the memories of days gone by,
Days when I knew not pain or e'en a single tear,
Of gladdest dreams and things most treasured in past years,
To me thou art so dear.

Sweet as the fragrance of arbutus blooms
Which trail in mossy nooks and thrive from man apart
Or of a full-blown orchard visited at dusk,
So sweet to me thou art.

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NATURE'S SECRET

FOR ages men have sought in vain to learn
Of Alchemy the secret; how to turn
Plain silver into gold,
One thing into another of a greater worth.
But nature still the answer doth withhold
Though flaunting her own power through methods manifold;
For as the sun up-mounts the sky each morn,
Where moon-made silver lay the night before,
Patches of shimmering gold these spots adorn
And what were naught but dew-drops, if we now explore
Behold! bright crystals in their stead are born.

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LETTERS AND ART

This poem was written to be read before the Φ B K Society at the annual meeting held in Philadelphia, December, 1915.

LETTERS and Art!
What magic lies in these twin-sister words,
They conjure up what wealth of mental imagery
For all who strive to understand,
Who seek to press beyond those narrow paths
Which bound the little lives of everyday.
Letters and Art! Two potent words
For ever they must help to shape men's destinies.

To-day — perhaps to-morrow — we discuss
Brave records of some world-inspiring deed,
Some noble act,

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Some goal attained by might of sword alone;
And yet how soon these records all must pass
Into oblivion's void
Unless they be writ down within the book of years
By Art's deep-graving tool
Or clear illumined letter of the Scribe.

Art came to man ere letters. First up-sprung
The glories of an Ancient Greece,
Fair wonder-forms of stone which still stand forth
As mighty monuments to master-minds.
Long ages have elapsed
Since these great children of great thoughts
Were given birth and shape,
Yet still from zone to zone,
O'er all the vast world civilised,
Unto this day

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Greece shows the perfect models of a perfect
art.
Though we be quite un-knowing, art must ever
weave
Refining bonds of influence
Around our high desires and mold our very
lives.

As centuries rolled by
Vain men have sought to innovate
Creations of their own,
Yet most creations which survive
The sure, discriminating test of time,
Contain some element defined or classic sign
Filched from a Greek original.

Then, in a flood all glorious, letters came. And
now,
When we the pages of our books turn o'er,

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What treasures lie exposed for wondering eyes.
According to our momentary mood,
Here we the inmost thoughts may share
Of poet, sage, philosopher
Whose words are vital on this very day
Though the man breathing them is dead
Perhaps a thousand years ago.
And so we learn that deeds of men
Die not when men die but, if good or bad,
Writ down may live immortalised
And given thus to all posterity,
Are praised or are despised.

So if we but reflect each one must comprehend
What wealth of dower comes to all
Who seek and woo successfully

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Or art's elusive muse or literature's;
For surely it must thrill the human soul
To feel that one's own thoughts
May be transmitted to one's fellow men
Through mediums far-reaching and secure
Of painting, writing, music or the sculptor's craft.
And surely this same knowledge should bring forth
All that is best in us and should inspire
Each one to seek fair, lofty goals
Which seemed beyond our reach before.

Such passion for expression knows no bounds;
Even the uncouth savage who exists
Merely from day to day,

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Whose life's horizon bounded seems
By lusts for food, for flesh, for fighting and for sleep,
Not far removed from animals he lives, he dies.
Yet most of these same savages
On rocks, on clay may trace their crude designs,
Recording thus their narrow, void careers
And fashion forms of pottery
In primitive attempt at art.
Once even such as they create, they pass beyond
The small, ignoble few
Who in an uncreating darkness dwell.
It might well be maintained
That men's gradation in the human scale
May be adjudged
By what each has of letters or of art.

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And we who gather in this hall to-night
I am quite sure experience at times
Strange feelings not unmixed with awe
At sight of some fair monument,
Of painting rare, of temple's sacred fane
Or when some passage exquisite we scan
Or listen to the pulsing, rythmic throb
Of music's magic strains.
Why that same awe to wonder turns
And of a sudden comes to inmost selves the
thought
That these same things of beauty may have
charmed
Ten thousand times ten thousand eyes,
Ten thousand times ten thousand ears.

And whether we be moved by master-works
of man
Or master-works by God and nature formed,

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Emotions much the same in most of us are
born.
Silent perhaps, we listen or we gaze
Yet filled with many words which, though un-
voiced,
Contain the mystic quality of prayer.

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THE DIFFERENCE

I LISTEN to the words of some and yet
They make no more impression than a wind
Which darts across still pools and leaves behind
The surface ruffled where it stoops to wet
Parched lips, then hurries swiftly on once more.
Faint ripples mark each spot; they widen, wane
And in a moment all is calm again,
The pools more placid seeming than before.

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But mighty glaciers of an age long past,
That forced from mountain heights their certain way,
Though vanished now themselves, on rocks, on clay,
On everything which touched those borders vast
Have deeply carved their record, lasting, clear.
Yet not more deeply, not more lastingly
Than now is carved upon my memory
Each word that thou hast voiced for me to hear.

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BELIEF

SURELY you were not born, dear love,
As we poor mortals here were given birth.
Ah, no! I think some radiant star
Fell, weary, from the heavens above
And you had come to grace, a while, our earth.

Surely, dear love, you cannot die
As others must who live upon this sphere.
Ah, no! A fair, new star will be
Discovered in the evening sky
Then we will find that you are gone from here.

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TO A WILD ROSE

BORN with the breath of wood nymphs
fanning thee,
Laved by the early morning dew,
Thy shade of pink was filched from Eastern
skies
Just ere the sun appeared in view.

As this sun rose, thy heart became pale gold,
All day its warmth helped thee to grow,
At eve a drowsy brook lulls thee to rest,
Thy slumber song the night winds blow.

Wild rose we name thee while thou givest us
Thy fair, pink beauty and sweet scent,
Or is this not the wood nymphs' fragrant
breath
Which fanned and made thee redolent?

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IN A MIRROR

IF near my lips a mirror should be held
I think upon its surface thou couldst see,
Were I awake or in my hours of dreams,
Thy dear name breathed in mist-like tracery.

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THREE QUESTIONS

THERE came one to me asking questions three;
"Hast thou e'er been aroused from some fair dream
And, while but half awake, thought that to thee
Came strains of music which did almost seem
As though from Heavenly choirs they must be?"
"Nay," answered I. "Yet, even were all mine the choice,
More wonderful to me would be my loved one's voice."

Then, questioning again, my friend inquired
"Hast thou perchance sat on some winter night
Before thy lonely hearth when it transpired
That thou didst feel a ghostly touch though sight

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Revealed not one whom thou hadst most desired?"

"Nay," I replied, "such things I need not understand

For I may feel and see my own beloved's hand."

"Now tell me finally, hast thou e'er trod

With faltering feet upon thy weary way

When, suddenly, it seemed as if kind God

Awarded that for which thou oft didst pray,

Hast thou e'er glimpsed at Heaven nor deemed this odd?"

"Yes," I replied, "my friend," he looked up in surprise,

"Yes, often, have I gazed into my loved one's eyes."

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TO THOSE WHO VIGIL KEEP

SOMETIMES the look of pain or utter weariness
On a dear face of one about to leave
For unknown realms we mortals may not guess,
Is banished even as we watch and grieve
While, in its place,
A sweetness, ah! how wonderful, doth now succeed,
As though, in death, we saw reflected on this face
Expressions of the angels who have come
From those far realms beyond the stars to lead
Our waiting loved one home.

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IN A GARDEN

I SAT one day within a garden fair
Pining for thee and sad because alone,
Wishing some fate could send thee to me there.

All things appeared to share my saddened mood,
Each flower drooped, the sun was hid from view,
The very birds in silence seemed to brood.

Then, as I day-dreamed with my eyes half closed,
Sudden the birds began to sing again,
The flow'rs, uplifting heads, no longer dozed.

Thinking the sun had come once more for me
And for all nature, to effect such change,
I turned and lo! saw not the sun but thee.

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SUNSET AND THUNDER CLOUDS

GREAT banks of storm clouds, leaden-
hued, appear
Up-mounting in far, Western, sunset skies,
Each border shifting shape as the clouds rise,
Now jagged peak, now chasm yawning sheer.

These armies of the mist the sun now claim
Yet, in his waning, potent still he seems
For, as he is engulfed, each cloud-edge gleams
And sudden bursts into a fringe of flame.

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BENEATH A WINDOW

DEAR heart, beneath your window,
I picture in my mind a bed of flowers,
Rare, tiny, fragrant violets,
Lifting fair faces to the sun and showers.

For did you not confide that once
You leaned without and wept through loneliness?
So now I think there must be sprung
A bloom where fell each tear which you confess.

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THE SCENT OF ROSES

AS written letters, on a page that burns,
Grow faint and fainter till some magic flame,
Quite different from the others, makes each name
Stand out distinct just ere the paper turns
To pale, gray ashes; so likewise with me
When fades thy vision in my wearied brain
And comes the scent of roses. For again,
As if by magic, now immediately
The vision rises clear and sharp defined.
Yet, to each dying word those flames renew
Its life but for a moment while I view
Thy face within my strengthened brain enshrined
Long after fail these perfumes which remind.

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THE ISLAND OF FORGETFULNESS

THERE is an island in a far-off sea
Which lies, like some rare emerald, in a blue
As deep as that of sapphires yet but few
E'er reach this isle to anchor in the lea,
Though many start weighed down by misery.
The skies o'erhead are always wondrous fair,
The spring is never-ending and the flow'rs
Fade not or die; the all too fleeting hours
Are passed in bliss, each wholly free from care.

'Tis called The Island of Forgetfulness;
There dreams come true and what one most desires
Is ne'er denied, but without fail transpires.
All those who land and feel the soft caress
Of winds that waft their welcome from the marge,

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Are charmed by some strange, unseen power and soon
Forget the past; then God grants them the boon
Of life just for the present, and in charge
Of kindly fates who dry away all tears.
And ah, how few are those who, when they reach
The much-sought shores, are able to remain;
Most stay a little while and then again
Sadly they set their sails for lands where each
Must tread once more the paths of grief and pain.
Yet blest are all who rest e'en but a day
In this retreat for as remembered dreams
Oft-times refresh our waking thoughts, it seems
The memories of glad hours of joy convey
New strength to help us on our weary way.

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This island you and I may also know,
Perchance to-morrow or in after years;
But we can surely find it if love steers
Our seeking ship and we together go;
Nor matters then how stormy winds may blow.

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THE SEA

HOW many secrets does this vast thing keep,
This thing men call the sea, and in its depths,
How many of these men lie silently,
Grim victims of a might they fought in vain?

Great vessels boldly start to sail across
These waters, vessels boasting of their strength;
Then strikes the tempest, hungry waves up-reach;
Where are those vessels, where this vaunted power?
Some stagger to their ports in crippled shape
While others, after struggling for a while,
Give up the fight with final, frantic plunge.

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Slowly they sink at first but gather speed
When now mad waters lap their topmost rails,
Then down each slides with sullen, sobbing sound
Muffled by roar of gale and conquering wave.
A few on board may manage to escape
And bring home awesome tales for wondering ears,
Tales of sad, aimless drifting in small boats,
Wild hunger, deadly thirst and hideous fears.
The rest,— a helpless crew on helpless ships,
Bound for strange ports uncharted and unguessed,
While through the shattered windows or the doors,
Huge fish and loathsome, slimy creatures pass
Searching each corner — weird, unwelcome guests.

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If wind and wave have failed to satisfy
With victims for an ocean's greedy maw
Perchance the ice receives its fell command;
Floating almost submerged and hard to view,
A fearful bulk which rends the stoutest plank.
Or sight-destroying fog through which men pass
Yet cannot see and so run on dread rocks.
Or sunken reefs which stretch forth waiting arms,
Like clinging tentacles, and gather toll.
Yes, many weapons does this vast thing know
But deadliest,— those battered, drifting hulks
Abandoned by their crew, with decks awash,
No lights to warn at night,— the derelicts.
Grim vagary of fate that these ghost-ships
Already perished, should be left to give
A death blow to those other ships which sail
Unconscious of this menace, till it strikes.

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" Creature of moods thou art, O mighty sea,
With temper ruled by whence the winds may
blow.
If come fair breezes from thy Southern shores
Reminding thee of tropic heat and calms,
Quite lazily thou art content to drowse.
When storms descend recalling gale-swept
coasts,
As though in sympathy thy bosom heaves,
And thou dost rise in wild, tumultuous rage.

" Most things which hear thy call, the ships, the
men,
Small mountain streams that start on distant
way
Acquiring strength as other streams join in,
And finally, great rivers, reach their goal,
Most shall be lost in thy immensity.

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The rivers when they cross thy bars, the ships,—
Perchance their first day out should fate agree,
Or mayhap some will sail until long years
Have caused each plank to rot; thou wilt obtain
Just worthless bones. All men who do persist
In tempting thy forbearance over long,
As grim reward these also dost thou claim.

" Below thy surface, in thy silent deeps,
A weird and watery world without a sky,
We know tall mountains, valleys, plains, exist
Quite like those here above. And yet for us
Who know thy ways, we picture in these deeps
A land of gruesome harbors for dead ships,
Of tombs for perished men, a land of ghosts,
Mysterious gloom and everlasting night."

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AS A MIRROR — SO MY HEART

FOR those who stricken lie upon their beds
of pain,
The plain, gray mirror by some window placed
Is turned, when comes the day, into a magic
thing
On which the wonders of a world outside are
traced.
Yet this same magic thing when vanishes the
day,
Becomes again naught but a mirror plain and
gray.

And so my heart when thou approacheth near,
Thrilling with strange, sweet joys, becomes a
treasure-store
Yet when thou dost depart, ah then, dear love,
Only an empty heart it is once more.

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TO A VIOLET

FROM what vast, secret, hidden source
Dost thou obtain thy wondrous dower
Of fragrance and fair loveliness,
O little, purple flower?

Thy beauty shames that of the rose
While on thy virgin breast, at dawn,
Gleam dew-drops,— Nay, are they the tears
Of fairies just now gone?

And from thy heart dost thou dispense
Perfumes of lands both East and West;
Mysterious combination rare;
Yes, thou art very blest.

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HOW DIFFERENT

AS thrills a harp when struck by certain
hands,
Seeming, almost, as though with life imbued
But answers not for others when they seek
Upon its potent silence to intrude,

So, at the magic of a loved one's touch,
Our heart strings throb and thrills our inmost
soul,
Yet both for others unresponsive lie,
Nor matter with what wiles these would cajole.

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At times a forest dell, in shadow still,
Quite dull appears though graced with many a
flower,
Then comes the sun or moon, at once for us
This spot is changed into a perfect bower.

And often when we stand within some room,
Though filled with many persons it may be,
Lonely and void the room seems to our eyes
Until the face of one beloved we see.

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AUTUMN

AFTER THE FIRST FROST

SOME Spirit of the North has hovered near,
First vanguard of great hosts which follow on
Perchance to-day, perchance not yet awhile;
But they have left the land of lasting snows
And like grim fates are started on their way.
Already plants and trees have felt the breath
That withers and destroys their verdant life;
A seared and yellow leaf, a wilted bloom,
A shade of brown where yesterday was green,
These tell us that the Summer now is o'er,
While Autumn drear and sad comes on apace.

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Henceforth all nature drowses and doth seek
Some sheltered spot where it may lie and rest
Through Winter days grown brief and length-
ening nights,
In that deep slumber so akin to death.
The wind that whispered softly through the
trees,
Blows fitfully and moans with ghost-like sound,
Voicing its tale of coming frost and snow.

Wild creatures both of forest and of field
Heed well the warning that is given them.
No longer do we hear an insect's drone,
The booming sound of frogs or hum of bees;
For they have found, each one, a hidden lair
And in these dark retreats their silence keep.
Look closely, you will see the tiny squirrels
In busy search for nuts and various food
Which now for future use they hoard away,
Oblivious to their present hunger-cry.

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The birds of flight have heard the Southing call
And wing their certain way to warmer climes:
Whence comes the mystic call and how conveyed
Just what directs that straight, unerring flight,
Is known to God, but not to you and me.

Ah! Strangely quiet is the wood to-day
Since nature now to rest hath lain her down
But we have faith this stillness cannot last,
That at some future time when comes the spring,
Warm, conquering winds will blow from out the South
And drive back to their frozen, ice-bound shores,
Chill spirits of the North which long held sway.
Then birds will sing again, this forest gloom
As if by magic touch will disappear;

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The plants and trees will waken from their
dreams,
All living things that creep or move on wings,
Each,— strengthened by its long, life-giving
sleep.

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THE WITCHING HOUR

TO those who stroll amid cool forests' gloom
There comes at times the fragrance of some bloom
Which grows unseen and hidden from all view
Yet sends this perfumed message to the few
Who happen near, and makes its presence known.
Likewise, sometimes when I sit quite alone,
A sudden feeling comes that thou art there
Invisible yet close beside my chair.

But when almost expectantly I turn,
Both hands outstretched towards what I can discern
Only with eyes tight closed, then instantly
I realise that thou art fled from me

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As fragrance of the hidden bloom swift flees
Before some vagrant, dissipating breeze,
Giving us but its memory to remind.
Yet thy departing spirit leaves behind
A subtle pledge, for I could almost swear
There lingers on the fragrance of thy hair,
More dear to me than scent of rarest flowers,
A comfort in my dark and lonely hours.

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THE SEA WOLVES

GREAT, slimy monsters of the cruel sea,
Wolves of a watery world, relentless, grim,
How stealthily on gruesome quest they move,
Searching the depths with small, pale, lidless eyes;
Unblinking, sleepless both by night and day,
Naught in their puny brains save lust for blood;
Ready to dash at, seize and then devour
Even a crippled brother; none are spared.

In vessels' ruffled wakes they trail along
Or sullenly drift by whene'er, becalmed
These vessels wallow, windless, in the trough
With sails reflected on a glassy sea.
Sudden is cleft the surface by sharp fins
Attached to shadow-bulks that glide beneath.

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"The Sharks! The Sharks!" Strong men pass on these words
Then hurry, each one curious, to the rail;
Seeming by some odd fascination held,
At those detested shapes spell-bound they gaze.
To most come thoughts, unsummoned, of far homes
Which sudden seem more distant than before.
Some few may coarsely jest, a few may curse
But in the hearts of all I think there creeps
A feeling of strange awe, of loneliness.

Should storms descend
Resistless, overwhelming these proud ships
Until, sad, battered hulks they disappear,
As each one slowly sinks, the sharks now swim
In ever lessening circles then, grown bold,
They pass through shattered doors and soon become
Weird pilots for uncharted ports unguessed.

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" Quite different from most other things which
swim,
Strange mammals giving birth unto your young,
With mouth so placed that you must partly
turn
On back or side ere you may seize your prey,
With fangs, saw-edged, arranged like shears to
cleave
And pointing down towards maws insatiate
So things once seized upon cannot escape,
When you were planned,
Great, loathsome gluttons, feared, abhorred by
all,
Aye! Nature surely was in hateful mood."

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THE TENNIS MATCH

KEEN and alert and with combative eye,
Two white-clad figures on a ground of green,
They face each other with the net between.

For one brief count immovable they poise
(As hawks poise sometimes ere they downward sheer)
Then darts across the net a speeding sphere.

Driven by hard-swung racket, this now seems
A signal which brisk, sudden action brings;
Each white-clad figure into motion springs.

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Silent, their straining lips tight-pressed, they glide
With panther-grace and swiftly flashing feet,
A point to press or an attack to meet.

And when the match is o'er, a word of praise
To victor by the vanquished — no ill-will;
The game, the fight good sportsmanship instil.

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AT PARTING

FAREWELL! Ah drear, sad word,
thou canst but bring
Long heart-aches and an ending of the spring
To those who love and yet must separate.
Still, they have hopes of meeting soon again
While treasured recollections lessen pain;
The past is theirs; to-morrows they await.

Yes, far more sad are those who say good-bye
For always and who, hopeless, weep or sigh
At thought of dear, glad hours that come no
more;
Of glances from loved eyes now dimmed by
death,
Of words low murmured with the fleeting
breath.
Oh thoughts which haunt and burn! Oh days
of yore!

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And now when thou and I perforce must go
By different paths, remember that although
These paths may wind and lead our steps afar,
They will unite again. Grieve not since thus
We are so blest with mem'ries and for us
The door of future years remains ajar.

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DAWN IN JUNE

THE world seems wrapped in hushed expectancy,
Stilled is the sough of wind through reed and tree,
Stilled are all night sounds but the rythmic drone
Of insects which themselves have drowsy grown.

The sky itself, the vaulted dome of space,
Now turns more dark while each star shows its face
A trifle brighter just as though it knew
How soon in Eastern skies would come to view
An orb before whose glowing, conquering fire,
Starlight must pale then instantly expire.

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And so, as oft-times things about to die,
More lovely show themselves, likewise on high
Those stars with two-fold radiance seem to shine;
They bathe all in their light yet naught define.

A little while then far-off Eastern skies
Are streaked with bars of gray as darkness dies.
At this first sign some bird gives forth its call;
Ten thousand others answer to enthrall,
Each one, a listening mate that tends the brood,
Hearing again sweet songs with which 'twas wooed
And these combine in one great pæan of joy,
Soft wondrous music that could never cloy.

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The very air throbs with glad melody
As gray-streaked heavens brighten rapidly
Changing dark shades for gay, prismatic hues
Until the sun itself comes to suffuse
All nature with its warm, life-giving rays.
Pale mists swift vanish even as we gaze,
Each blade of grass dries up its dewy tears,
Each thing, that breathes of night, now dis-
appears.

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WHEN A LOVED ONE IS NEAR

WHEN a loved one is near,
How eloquent the silence of deep woods,
The piping of a robin in the rain,
The song of thrushes watching o'er their broods,

A sudden dash of sleet against the pane
Or lisping patter of soft-drifting snow,
The fire's cheerful crackle from the hearth
When moaning storm winds blow.

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How wonderful to watch the Eastern sky
As darkness dies and dawn's bright hosts appear
Then later, see the daylight fade in turn,
When a loved one is near.

But with our loved one gone,
These same things no unusual charm possess,
Their meaning fails, we comprehend them not
Yet oft they bring a strange, vague loneliness.

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TO A STAR

FAIR star of a fair, August sky,
Child of the summer sun and moon,
What is thy sudden, sweet, unlooked-for boon?
Why dost thou shine so brilliant and outvie
In radiance e'en thy parent orbs, ah why?

Tell me, is it through sheer delight
At thought of thy life scarce begun,
That thou canst always wax when wanes the sun,
Or is it not because from thy far height
Thou dost watch o'er my love asleep this night?

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YOUTH AND OLD AGE

YOUTH

BESIDE my hearth, alone; the end of day;
Yet not alone for crowding to my mind
Come hopes and thoughts, an endless, glad array,
Thrilling though scarcely half defined.

The hopes of struggle sought and goals attained;
Fond thoughts of love, full-crowned, bright days in store,
While, 'mid the glowing flames, in fancy feigned,
Are pictured faces quite unknown before.
Ah Sleep! If these be lost when thou art gained,
Thy realms I seek not to explore.

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Old Age

Beside my hearth; the end of day, alone;
Yet not alone for to my weary brain
Come trooping thoughts and memories one by one,
Filling my soul with vague, strange pain.

Sad thoughts of many things which might have been,
Memories of wonder-days which come no more,
And through the waning flames dear faces seen
Of those who wait upon a distant shore.
Ah God! If true oblivion sleep doth mean,
Grant that I pass its threshold o'er.

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IN JUNE

HOW fair and fragrant doth the woodbine grow,
Stretching forth tendrils over roof and wall,
Clothing each stone in living green as though
It heard and heeded Spring's awakening call;
Yet close around thine open window there aloft, ah! there
I think it grows more fragrant still, a little bit more fair.

We mortals pass adown life's stony ways
Finding our smiles and tears as God designs:
Sometimes one joy for many a sorrow pays
And so I'm sure that, just as with these vines,
For us who know thy presence, see the wonder of thy face,
Our lives are made more fragrant, the world seems a fairer place.

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TO MOUNT ARARAT

WITH hoary head uplifted 'mid the clouds
Which wreathe its furrowed brow and veil its face
Or draw far off a mighty height to show
Stands Ararat dividing three great lands.

"O great, majestic mountain of all time
Already wast thou old when came the ark
To rest upon the loftiest of thy peaks,
Safe refuge from a slow-subsiding flood
Though all known other things were still submerged.
Towering above thy fellows, thou hast seen
The human race begin and pygmy man
Contending, fighting, planning down the years;
Yet came grim death alike to slave and king
While thou didst gaze with pity or disdain.

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" Mother thou art of streams which have their
birth
In thy vast, snow-girt flanks then hurry down
To nourish mighty rivers in their turn
And so bring gladness to a waiting world.
At Dawn thou dost behold the rising sun
When we below can see but fading stars,
And this sun, later sinking in the West,
Thine ice-crowned brow caresses with last rays,
Yet elsewhere hover shadows and gray dusk.
Black night descends, then comes an Eastern
moon,
With molten silver now thy slopes are bathed,
Ethereal, shimmering in the pale, weird light;
All nature looks, spell-bound all nature seems.

" We men who live and die scarce comprehend
Such beauty or thy great longevity;
Unheeding storm and time, stand on supreme
O rock of ages past, of years to come."

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THE WHITE ROSE'S MISSION

GO fair, pure flower, go
Bearing sweet messages of love from me
And tell the one to whom I send thee so
Each thing I now tell thee!

Then, with this mission o'er,
Though fails thy fragrance and thy beauties fade,
Mayhap thou wilt be placed in some safe drawer,
'Mid other treasures laid.

And though thy life be spent,
Whene'er this drawer is visited, alone,
My message, through thy dead yet clinging scent,
Will live again for one.

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TO THE FOUR WINDS

O BALMY wind that comes from far off
Southern Seas,
O fragrant wind that rests oft-times in placid
leas
Of islands coral-girt and steals their flowers'
scent,
About clear waters blue and bluest firmament
Thou hast a tale for us. Also of giant palms,
Huge, tropic ferns, white glare, moist heat
and deadly calms.

O Wind exhaling grief, East wind of mystery,
All men shun thy embrace, while nature fear-
fully
Doth cower and despair till pass thy ghost-like
wings,
Dank, reeking palls called fog, the breath of
seas, it brings

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Great dread unto our hearts. These blinding
mists provide
A cloak for thy misdeeds which thou dost well
to hide.

And thou, great, boisterous wind that rushes
madly forth
From caves which gave thee birth far in the
frozen North,
Thou tellest us of lands whence come the snow
and frost;
Thou boastest of thy might and ships like
feathers tossed
Which thou didst hurl and wreck on reefs of
ice-bound coasts.
Too well we realise thine are not empty boasts.

O healing, clearing breeze that comes from out
the West,

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Of all the winds that blow, the world doth love
thee best.
New life to things which live and vigor dost
thou bring,
A message of good cheer, a promise of the
spring;
Dark, lowering storm-clouds yield and flee at
thy caress.
Yes, thou art ever kind, O wind of happiness.

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TO ONE AWAY

HOW do I feel with thee away?
Nay,— ask how feels the lonely, darkening night
Bereft of moon and stars, or else the day
Should it be robbed of sun and light.

Or ask how feels the dying rose
Deprived of moisture, or some clinging vine
Whose prop is filched, whose life draws to its close;
Their answer would be mine.

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TO ONE DEPARTED

IN some safe, hidden drawer I laid away
The pale blue flowers thou didst give to me
When we two strolled, led by our destiny,
Through shaded forest paths and thou didst say
That thou didst care for me. Oh happy day
And oft-remembered spot, where we both knew
The ecstasies of love; how moments flew
While death or pain in some dim future lay!

Mayhap these forest paths, in days gone by,
Were visited by other women fair
Who gave such flowers or a lock of hair
As tokens of their love, and, with a sigh,
The men beside them, just as once did I,
Received the tokens, with as tender care.

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It may be also that, from time to time,
These lovers, singly or together, came
To know the smart of fleeting years or claim
Of death; which meant that all their joys sublime
Were past, and they could never more retrace
Glad footsteps through their flowered, wooded path.
And ah! how very sad the aftermath
For us who ran with death our losing race,
The death of fond hopes cherished long ago
Or of a loved one. So, when more and more
We suffer, stealing to our secret drawer,
We gaze on faded, pale blue flow'rs, e'en though
They are but ghosts of yester-year, we know.

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And yet these flowers ever will retain
Some subtle, haunting odor as of yore.
So, in my drawers of memory, I store
Dear but sad thoughts which help me live again
Those days gone by, and which, as with the
flow'rs,
Nor years nor death nor many suffering hours
Can rob of all their fragrance,— or their pain.

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COMPARISON

THE little bird with plumage plain and dull
Whose notes sound harsh, whose songs in sweetness fail,
To its own mate is e'en more wonderful
Than bird of Paradise or nightingale.

And so it is with those who truly love;
Observing just the best nor asking more,
Although a world may scorn and disapprove,
Each other's faults they see not — or ignore.

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THE STORY OF A ROSE

AS died one day in early June
Was born a tiny, crimson bloom
Then, as it first gazed on the world,
Your voice was heard within your room.

For this small blossom, just a rose,
Beneath your window had its birth,
It looked to see whence came that sound,
Observed the opening far from earth.

Yes, though to you and me that height
Would be as nothing, to the rose
Long seemed the way to climb and steep;
The flower pondered ere it chose.

Then, once again, your voice was heard,
The bud, enraptured, thrilled with love:
Henceforth impatiently it strove
To gain your window high above.

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Each day less distance intervened
As ever up the blossom went,
Each eve your voice came softly down
As though in sweet encouragement.

Then finally the goal was reached,
The rose full-blown had won its race,
But you had left that very day
And moved to some far distant place.

The flower clambered o'er the sill
And peeped within, naught met its stare
Except a vacant, lonely room;
Ah! even flowers may feel despair.

That night you came not or the next,
The following morn some one espied
A fading rose without your sash
And idly wondered why it died.

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TO ONE ABSENT

OFTTIMES at saddest hour when breaks
the pale, gray dawn,
I waken from my slumber and dear dreams of
thee;
All nature starts to rouse, my blinds aside are
drawn,
Yet enters not the light, the hour is dark for
me.

Too soon I realise that I am here alone
While thou art left in lands where comes nor
grief nor pain;
No pleasures of this world can for thy loss
atone,
I fain must seek thee in the world of dreams
again.

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HOW STRANGE IT SEEMS

HAST thou e'er thought how passing strange it seems
That often-times grim tales of dreadful war and woe,
Of saddest suffering, e'en a view of death itself,
Can leave the eyes quite dry; is this not so?

Then mayhap later, borne upon the breeze,
Come strains of memory-hallowed music to our ears,
Or comes the haunting fragrance of some little flower,
And now these same eyes are suffused with tears.

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THE ABANDONED HOME

APART, deserted, lonely now it stands,
The one-time home of those who lived there for a space,
Who heard the call of death, mayhap, or else of fate
And went their sad ways to some other place.

The lichen-covered gate that bars a path
Which leads up to the house beneath great, hoary pines
As though discouraging intruders who would pass
Is held by twining branches of strong vines.

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Perchance their seeds were planted by fair
hands
Of one who died herself ere she could view
these things
For which she once had stooped and dug to
give them birth;
We all may sow, but fate our answer brings.

I tear aside this verdant, growing lock
Yet, when I force my way, the tendrils which
were rent
Stretch out like clutching fingers of a drown-
ing man
To scratch and cling as though in fierce dissent.

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I now approach the ivy-covered walls,
The porch enclosed in woodbine and my final goal;
Upon the fragrant breeze are borne in scented waves
Perfumes of flow'rs from which it took sweet toll.

And glancing o'er the lawn I see these blooms
Of lilac, violet and crimson, garden rose
That struggle to exist amid rank, choking weeds
Whose sure encroachment means their lives must close.

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The queer, stale odor of a place long sealed
Gives me unpleasant greeting when I force the door
And pass at length beyond its threshold to a hall
Re-echoing my footsteps on the floor.

Unusual sounds for this deserted house,
They now intrude upon the silence of each room;
I hear some frightened mice rush off with scurrying feet,
A bat, disturbed, flits by into the gloom.

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Beside a great, wide open hearth I pause
And picture in my mind how others took their stand
Or sat on wintry nights before the cheerful blaze,
What tales they would relate, what things were planned.

A thousand eyes, no doubt, in by-gone years,
Have gazed on this same hearth which also mine behold,
Perchance some watched until the embers paled and died;
How many of their fires are too grown cold?

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How many tiny beings first saw the light
In these bare rooms explored when now I
mount the stairs?
How oft came death to claim those who await-
ing lay
Or those in slumber, taken unawares?

I ponder o'er these things and all the while
A low, weird sobbing of the wind comes to my
ears,
Nay,— is it sighing of departed ones returned
To view again their home of former years?

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I must away for light gives place to dusk,
Already, here within, black night spreads out
its pall,
The sun slants long, gray shadows down the
Western hills
As now I step from out the ghostly hall.

A pale, white moon appears and strikes its
fires
Then kindles to bright gold up in the Eastern
sky;
The same moon knew those dwelling in this
house,— will know
All those to come when gone are you and I.

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A little sad and sobered by such thoughts,
I wend my way once more down through the
flow'rs and trees;
The gate is opened, closed; I leave this blighted
spot
To silence, to its ghosts and memories.

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YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

THE heavens yesterday were overcast,
The sun was hid and all the world seemed drear
But ah! what difference did this make to me
For thou wast here.

To-day the skies are blue and very fair,
A golden Sun has gleamed since early dawn
But ah! what difference does this make to me
For thou art gone.

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THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN

DOWN in the steel-fringed, safe-deposit vaults
Attendants there would watch her come and go,
The strange, veiled woman always robed in black,
While picturing in their minds the wealth her box might show
Could it inspected be;
And yet each wondered why she came so frequently,
At least a visit every week or so.
Within one of the cell-like rooms
She would withdraw then close fast to the door
Remaining there, alone, sometimes an hour or more.

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In summer, winter, spring and fall alike,
For years she visited in this same way,
Always mysterious and always robed in black,
Until announcement of her death arrived one day.
Not wealth of gold, of stocks or bonds were found
When finally the box was opened up to view
But just a lock of golden hair,
The picture of a baby and one tiny shoe.

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THEN AND NOW

IN a fair garden spot
I wandered once at noon
Seeking brief respite from my daily toil;
A wealth of blooms grew there,
(Those blooms which welcome June)
And clothed with scented coverlet the soil.

It seemed naught could in fragrance to such
flowers compare;
But then, dear heart, I had not known thy hair.

I viewed twin radiant stars
Peep o'er the mountain's rim
And kiss the valley pool with mystic light
Then on its surface clear
Their shimmering features limn
And tiny waves, by silvered beams, unite.

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Could aught more lovely be in nature or in art?
Ah then I had not known thine eyes, dear heart.

I plucked a full-blown rose
Still moist with dew of dawn
And from it stole two petals crimson fair
And pressed both to my lips
Before upon the lawn
I dropped them crushed yet making sweet the air.

I thought naught could be softer than this rose full-blown
But then, dear heart, thy lips I had not known.

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WHY?

A YOUTH had all but reached the pinnacle of fame,
Though scarce mature in years his was the name
One heard on many a tongue.

Fashioned like some Greek god, of noble mien was he,
Possessed of every charm; his destiny
Seemed bounded by the stars.

But as he walked his lofty, well-earned path one day,
At peace with all the world, care-free and gay,
Death happened to pass near.

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And though Death knew full well the promise
of the youth,
Observed his grace, his beauty, without ruth
Death bore the lad away,

Then later overtook a sickly, crippled man
Who had already lived beyond the span
Of years allotted most.

Homeless he was and friendless, praying but
to die,
It seemed naught could his living justify;
Unheeding, Death passed on.

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IMPOSSIBILITIES

SWEETNESS and loveliness and grace!
Ah, dear one, how can it be true
That others these same charms possess
Which kindly fate dispensed to you?

For I would swear that you were given,
When fashioned by some magic deft,
Of these fair charms each smallest part;
How could for others aught be left?

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THE SUBMARINE

DESPISED, weird rover of the seas unseen,
Man-made leviathan with scales of steel,
Abortion given birth by brains unclean!

As might a cyclops, ocean-born, survey
With single sight the waters near and far,
So you to men a single eye display.

And the horizon scan with baleful stare,
Mark well a victim for your fell attack
Then slow submerge while deadly fangs you bare.

Sometimes a lookout spies the bubbling wake
Which marks where speeds your messenger of death
Yet can do naught but watch it overtake.

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More frequently no warning sign is given;
A mighty ship sails on, its fate unguessed,
When suddenly the hull apart is riven.

Amid the scenes of death and agony
Which soon succeed where peace had reigned
before,
You wallow gloating over what you see.

E'en those who give you life at times are slain;
Too long you stay submerged nor will obey
When, frantic, they would seek for air again.

Helpless as rats entrapped, they cannot flee
But suffering to the end must slowly die
Victims of their own ingenuity.

Abhorred, weird rover of the seas unseen,
A menace to both friend and foe alike,
Abortion given birth by brains unclean!

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ASSOCIATION

IN early May, I strolled one day
Amid a mighty city's din and moil,
Among those crowded ranks which sweat and toil,
Which know not what it means to play.

Then paused beside a fenced-in spot
O'er-strewn with dust and filth, with weeds o'er-grown,
A place where sunlight rarely ever shone,
The very air seemed stifling, hot.

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Yet there I spied a lonely flower
Sprung from some seed brought — who knows
how or why?
Lifting its lovely face up to the sky
As though it grew in fairest bower.

Now when some soul divine I see
Living in this sad world, pure, noble, strong,
Striving undaunted 'mid the weaker throng,
Thoughts of that flower revert to me.

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THE WEDDING MARCH FROM LOHENGRIN

THE Wedding March from Lohengrin!
Throbbing and pulsing through the gathered throng
Its soft, familiar strains now rise, now fall,
Bringing each heart and soul a fragrant song,
The old, old song of love;
Making of most of this vast audience
Lovers again.

And yet what varied thoughts are passing in these minds?
For love's song doth at times a sting possess
And there are those to whom come burning memories
With vain regrets for things which might have been,
Of wasted opportunities
And thoughts of future loneliness.

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Others there are who, in the light subdued,
Stretch forth appealing hands which meet, which press
And in the pressing once again renew
Pledges of days gone by.
Youth too is here, enthusiastic youth
Looking on love with first awakening eyes,
Observing thus naught but love's ecstasies,
Oblivious to its sorrows and its sighs.

And now the strains subside then die away,
Ah who may say
What dreams have come to youth in these brief moments past?
What joys re-found for some as the soft strains remind
But for a few — what sadness left behind!

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THE GREEK ISLANDS

LANDS of a mighty people dead long since,
Inhabited to-day by those who live
But through a glory which is not their own,
Which comes to them by right of race alone,
Thus do we see the once-famed Grecian Isles.

Still not in vain is glory such as this
For other nations came to find an art
The grace of which and beauty brought delight;
An art which left its mark adown the years
With monuments of stone which it inspired.

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Great must have been the men and great the minds
That could create such models or a type
Which stood the test of ages and remain
In splendor unsurpassed, by time unchanged;
For to this day, in countries far and near,
We find fair off-spring of those potent brains.

Yet, if the spirits of the dead return
And roam amid those scenes they knew in life
How grieved each one must be to view abodes
Wherein they dwelt, wide-open to the skies;
Broad highways, marble-paved, o'er which were wont
To march triumphant legions coming back
Victorious from some war, now rank with weeds,

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But paths for wandering goats, and everywhere
The vandal's hand has pilfered or destroyed.
Sad islands filled with ghosts and memories!
Look where we may but ruin meets our gaze,
Sheep stray at will among the crumbling walls
While — most incongruous spectacle of all —
A shepherd's hut where once a temple stood.

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SNOW-FLAKES

FROM foulest pool and clearest spring,
From unclean sources or from sources pure
The sun draws waters high into the sky
Then kisses them with rays which heal and cure.
When, at the magic of this kiss, each drop
Is made alike, again to earth below,
From all pollution freed, the sun returns them now
As rain or mists, as crystal hail or snow.
Those tiny, star-shaped flakes you catch upon your sleeve,
Mayhap were waters once in tainted streams, who knows?
And yet again we justly may believe
They were bright dew-drops on some lovely rose.

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THE RIVER

BEFORE man lived — long centuries ago,
A tiny stream of water, crystal-clear,
Of a secluded mountain lake was born
And from that time the lake's broad bosom fair
This infant stream has nurtured and has fed.
Rippling and swirling, babbling playfully,
Un-knowing and un-caring what each curve
Or bend might bring it set forth to explore.

And soon is met a little brook, so small
That scarcely doth the stream augment its size
When both together join and onward rush
United in a course which leads them on
To other brooks and still to others. Thus
Each one is lured; the tiny stream now grows
Into a tiny river, but as yet

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Unmindful of great power till it essays
A fierce attack which rends the solid earth,
Cleaving steep banks, eroding channels deep
As might some Titan of gigantic strength.

Each mile traversed brings still more brooks
and streams,
And all are wooed while every one becomes
A pulsing vein of the great artery
Which wooed and gets in turn from them its
being.
Grown to a mighty river now it brings
To those who live along the blessed shores,
Great crops, great harvests, riches, gladness,—
yet
At times, as though with pent-up rage it teemed,
Full vent is given to all its latent power.
Then, over-flowing banks, it devastates
And bares the lands which but an hour ago
Were blest instead of blighted by the flow.

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"Wouldst thou but speak so we poor mortals here
Could understand, O river of all time,
What wondrous tales to us thou couldst unfold;
For thou hast seen huge, mammoth beasts that came
Before the human race began, to slake
Their thirst along thy marge. A span of years —
Then followed man primeval, gaunt, uncouth,
Who lived high up above thy banks in caves
And worked or killed with implements of stone.
The bronze-skinned Indian thou hast also known,
The white men and their many million sons.
And coming down these ages, what strange craft
Have floated on thy waters, borne along
By wind or by thy current, fateful sure,
Propelled by rough-hewn paddle, later on
By oars of wood and finally by steam.

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Yes, thou art very wise. So are the rocks
Which guard and keep their watch along thy
shores;
But they are seared and gray with age, while
thou
Must know some fountain of eternal youth
And steal of its pure waters for thine own,
For thou are just as always, ever young.

" Called by an ocean mightier e'en than thou,
Roll on great river, roll resistless on!
Those men who boasted here but yesterday
At having chained an atom of thy power,
Where are they gone to-day, of what avail
To them who are no more? So, in disdain,
Thou flowest on as for ten thousand years,
As thou wilt flow until the end of time."

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DO DREAMS COME TRUE?

DO dreams come true?
Ah yes, I'm sure sometimes they do
For as, this morn, the dawn's first ghostly light
Stole through my chamber window putting to
swift flight
The gloom of night,
I dreamt an angel came and stood beside my
bed
And smoothed my troubled brow though not
a word was said.
Then sudden I awoke; lo! you were standing
there
With one dear hand laid gently on my hair.

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AT SUNSET

GREAT, Titan shapes, flame-fringed, loom
in the sunset skies,
Outrivalling in shades and tints
Rare, gorgeous butterflies
Or opals viewed by light of drift-wood blaze;
As though the sinking sun wished all the world
to gaze
Upon his hidden treasures, ere he wane,
So paints, upon the curtains of these shifting
clouds,
Each color that his spectrum doth contain.

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AT DUSK

THE calls of homing birds that seek their mates
Are wafted on the twilight breeze to me
Beside an open window whence I see
The sun about to close its gleaming gates
Of burnished gold. All over vale and hill,
With ghost-like stealth, the lengthening shadows creep
Enshrouding fields and trees in darkness deep;
Each bright till palls of mystic nothing kill
For each in turn the waning, shimmering light.
It seems as though grim night had hovered near
And, passing by, just touched with sable wings,
As with some magic wand, the rocks and things
Which but a moment since were outlined clear
Yet, even as I gaze, now disappear.

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So, those who know the joys of love and live
Forgetful of what future years may bring,
Must sometimes feel the cruel, deadly sting
Of griefs which strike and seldom warning give
But, like a shadow dark, they steal away
The joyful brightness of our yesterday.

And now the fading light is almost spent
While e'en the gentle zephyrs, whispering low
Of far-off scenes, then lower still as though
O'er-burdened with the fragrant, haunting scent
Of flowers oft caressed near wood and bay,
So drowsy grow, they cease to blow their lay.
There follows silence pregnant, tense, profound,
Yet — I could almost think I heard a sound
As if the world had sighed or else some fay
By me unseen when it too ceased from play;
For at this witching hour and near such ground,
We know these creatures of the wood abound.

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All nature seems to wait in hushed suspense
While, for a moment brief, the stillness lasts;
Then — could it be a thought of icy blasts
Endured some winter time of cold intense,
Or did there pass a spirit from the North,
That caused the world to shiver as it went?
For trees begin to quiver and are bent
As by a hand unseen while, from henceforth,
The air is chilled though fires of stars which
morn
In turn will quench, grow bright in darkening
skies;
The wind comes sudden, strong; I realise
A summer day has died, a night is born.

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ALWAYS

DO I behold the flaming sun
Burst from night's prison walls beneath the sea
And so proclaim to all another day begun,
Dear heart, I think of thee.

When, weary of his freedom sweet,
I watch this sun in Western waters sink
Then send his love the moon each waiting star to greet,
Of thee, dear heart, I think.

Hear I a song that lovely seems,
View I fair landscapes formed by nature's art,
Be I in waking hours or in my hours of dreams,
I think of thee, dear heart.

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EARLY NOVEMBER

A SOUND as though of sobbing in the trees,
With fitful, sullen gusts the wailing North wind blows
Foreboding death to Nature's bloom and green
Or the long, winter sleep beneath deep-drifting snows;
Stilled is the hum of bees and stilled the drone
Of summer-frenzied insects, hushed the carolling
Of birds and throaty boom of frogs.
Those very brooks and streams which in the spring
Rushed sea-ward with exulting, noisy flow
Now seem to murmur plaintively as though
Already they the binding clasp could feel
Of icy hosts which from them freedom steal.

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No longer to our senses comes the sweet perfume
Of field or forest flower since wilted is each bloom
And from the suffering branches overhead
Sere, faded leaves in sad procession fall
Then o'er the drowsing earth a shroud-like blanket spread.
High up above, in swift, unerring flight
The wild geese wing their way, against the clouds outlined,
Bound for a warmer clime and as they pass from sight
Derisively they taunt us lingering here behind.

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THE VALLEY OF DEPARTED DAYS

INTO the valley of departed days
How many here would fain again retrace
Their steps and stroll once more along those flowered ways
Hallowed by memories which time can ne'er efface,
Of youth and all that youth contained and memories
Of loved ones lost to them for life's brief space.

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For as we walk the path to future years
With feet which falter and more weary grow
As each new year succeeds, the pain, the griefs,
the tears
Of days gone by, forgotten are and we but
know
Their joys. The rearward road more beauti-
ful appears
The further on the road ahead we go.

THE END

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